

WHAT RESULT DO WE WANT?

North Carolina embraces a fair and equitable justice system, free from racism and bias, where safety is foundational to all aspects of a free society, and all communities are free from harm and violence.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

"People of color, notably African American men, are imprisoned at disproportionate rates and tend to face harsher punishment for similar crimes as their white counterparts. There are enormous health, social, and economic consequences of incarceration for both the imprisoned person, their families, and our communities."¹

HNC 2030 HEADLINE INDICATOR:
Number of people aged 13 and older entering North Carolina prisons per 100,000 population

WHAT DOES THIS INDICATOR MEASURE?

The indicator measures the rate of incarceration for people aged 13 years and older who enter the N.C. prison system during a calendar year. The rates are based on the jurisdictional population with sentence greater than one year. The data are obtained from the N.C. Department of Public Safety Automated Query System which is updated every six months.

<https://webapps.doc.state.nc.us/apps/asqExt/ASQ>

The data can be disaggregated by :

- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Prison Entries/Prison Exits/Prison Populations
- Age/Age Group
- Citizenship
- Country of Birth
- County of Conviction
- County of Residence
- Crime Category
- Marital Status

BASELINE DATA FROM HNC 2030



HOW ARE WE DOING?

The overall rate of incarceration in N.C. prisons has seen a significant drop from 347 per 100,000 population aged 13 and older in 2011, to 272/100,000 in 2019. An even greater drop occurred in 2020 with an overall incarceration rate in N.C. prisons of 163/100,000 population. The drop in 2020 is mostly related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the court system.

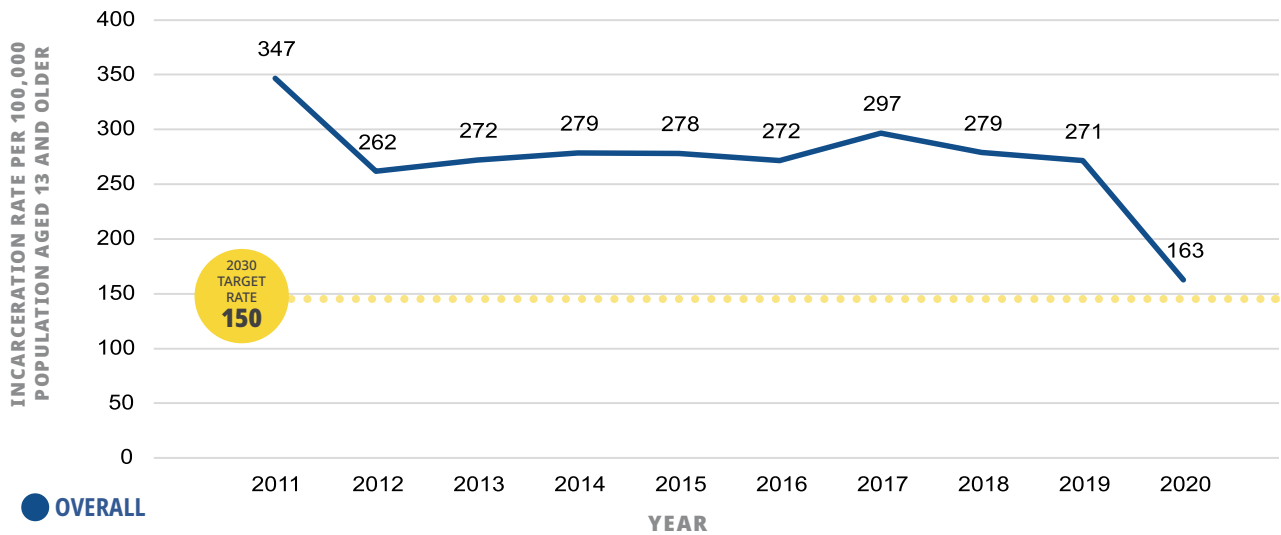
The incarceration rate for females has been stable with only small variations in the rates from 2011-2019.

The rate of incarceration for males dropped significantly from 632/100,000 population in 2011, to 271/100,000 population in 2019.

Black/African American people continue to have higher rates of incarceration than White/Caucasian or Hispanic people. The rate of incarceration of Black/African American people was 824/100,000 population in 2011 but dropped to 529/100,000 in 2019.

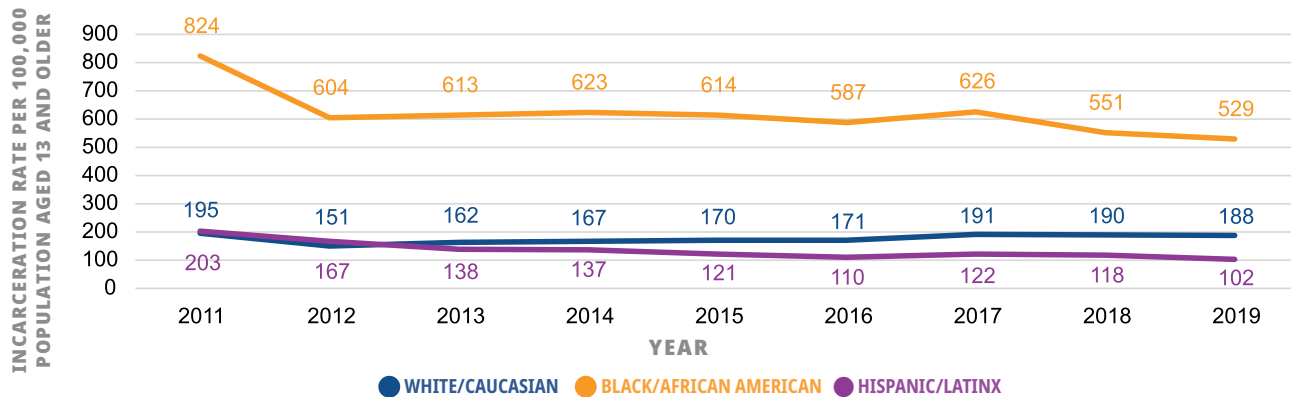
CURRENT DATA TRENDED OVER TIME

Figure 25. Incarceration rate in North Carolina prisons (2011 - 2020)



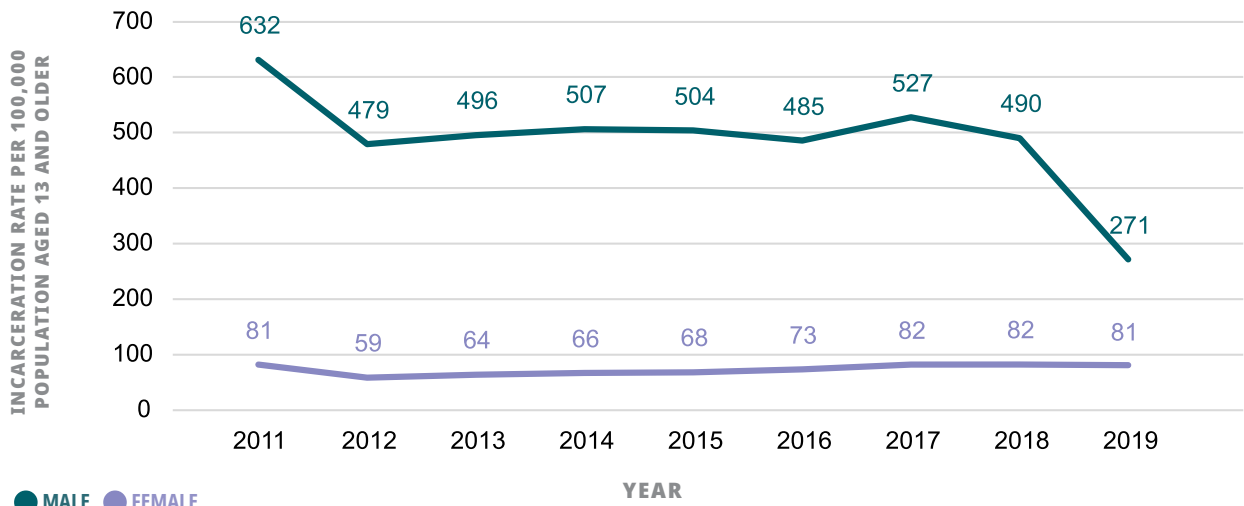
Data source: N.C. Department of Public Safety, N.C. State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics, and National Center for Health Statistics (CDC bridged race population).

Figure 26. Incarceration rate in North Carolina prisons by race/ethnicity (2011 - 2019)



Data source: N.C. Department of Public Safety, N.C. State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics, and National Center for Health Statistics (CDC bridged race population).

Figure 27. Incarceration rate in North Carolina prisons by gender (2011 - 2019)



Data source: N.C. Department of Public Safety, N.C. State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics, and National Center for Health Statistics (CDC bridged race population).

THE STORY BEHIND THE CURVE

According to SAMHSA, an estimated 18% of the general population has a mental illness. However, an estimated 44% of those in jail and 37% of those in prison have a mental illness.²

An estimated 11% of the 18–25-year-old population, and 6% of those over 25 years old have a substance use disorder. The estimated prevalence of substance use disorder in jails is 63% , and 58% in prisons.³

People with these disorders have challenges in getting appropriate treatment and often incarceration exacerbates their symptoms. This can lead to individuals staying incarcerated longer than those without behavioral health concerns. Upon release from incarceration, people with behavioral health issues face many barriers to successful reentry into the community, such as lack of health care, job skills, education, stable housing, and poor connection with community behavioral health providers. These factors may jeopardize their recovery and increase their probability of relapse and re-arrest.⁴

WHAT OTHER DATA DO WE NEED?

- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on prison population
- Demographics about people incarcerated or detained by the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Prison and jail population by state/year: <https://www.vera.org/publications/people-in-jail-and-prison-in-2020>
- Incarceration in local jails and state prisons: <https://www.vera.org/publications/state-incarceration-trends>
- Descriptive statistics that capture racial equity training provided for court system personnel
- Methodology for reporting racial data in the Administrative Office of the Courts
- Inventory of policies regarding use of force and duty to report excessive use of force at every level of the justice system
- Annual report of school-based offenses in public schools
- Inventory of mental health and substance use disorder services (screening and treatment) provided in jail health settings

WHAT COULD WORK TO TURN THE CURVE?

- Ensure access to behavioral health treatment, adequate medical care, and stable housing for those returning from incarceration
- Expand existing or create community Medication Assisted Treatment programs for those people detained in correctional facilities
- Implement standardized, evidence-based programs to reduce recidivism
- Improve access to treatment for substance use disorders, physical illnesses, and mental illnesses
- Improve conditions in jails and prisons to reduce harmful impact of incarceration and foster successful reintegration into the community
- Improve educational outcomes, particularly for young men and boys of color
- Increase access to multi-systemic therapy for juvenile offenders
- Invest in public health alternatives to traditional law enforcement and sentencing, particularly for behavioral health issues
- Reduce intergenerational and neighborhood poverty
- Secure funding to develop policies and practices that enhance the courts' capacity to respond to victims and others who have experienced trauma



“THE DATA SHOW THAT WE ARE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, BUT JUST NOT FAST ENOUGH.”

- 2021 NC SHIP Symposia participant

RECOMMENDED READING/LISTENING

Kang-Brown, J., Montagnet, C., and Heiss, J. (2020, January). People in jail and prisons. People-in-Jail-and-Prison-2020-Revised-2.pdf (vera.org)

North Carolina Department of Justice. (2021, December). North Carolina task force for racial equity in criminal justice: End of year report 2021. <https://ncdoj.gov/trec/reports/>

Vera Institute of Justice. Ending mass incarceration. <https://www.vera.org/downloads/pdfdownloads/state-incarceration-trends-north-carolina.pdf>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). Evidence-based practice resource center. People in the criminal justice system. <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp>

NC PARTNERS WHO CAN HELP US

PARTNER/POTENTIAL PARTNER	WEBSITE LINK
Durham County NC Criminal Justice Resource Center Growing Change, Inc	https://www.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-a-e/criminal-justice-resource-center
Leading Into New Communities (LINC), Inc.	https://www.growingchange.org/
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges	https://lincnc.org/
(NCJFCJ)-Trauma- Informed Courts	https://www.ncjfcj.org/child-welfare-and-juvenile-law/trauma-informed-courts/
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI)	https://www.dpi.nc.gov/data-reports/discipline-alp-and-dropout-data
North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC)	https://www.nchrc.org/
North Carolina Judicial Branch- School Justice Partnership	https://www.nccourts.gov/programs/school-justice-partnership
North Carolina Justice Academy	https://ncdoj.gov/ncja/
North Carolina Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice (TREC)	https://ncdoj.gov/trec/
Wash Away Unemployment	https://www.wash-away.org/